

GIVE YOUR HOCKEY EQUIPMENT A CHECK-UP

Most hockey athletes and parents don't know that some of the best methods to prevent injuries happen before you ever step foot on the ice: proper fit and care of your equipment. Knowing how to properly care for and fit your hockey equipment is just as important to your safety as proper training and technique.

The most important piece of equipment is the helmet and mask (cage). When fitted properly, helmets and cages can prevent facial, eye and mouth injuries as well as reduce the incidence of concussions.

Helmets must be approved by the Hockey Equipment Certification Council (HECC) or the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA). We recommend avoiding buying used helmets, as the inner pads have conformed to the previous owner's head and may create gaps and improper fit.

What constitutes a proper fit? The key criteria to follow are:

1. Snug (but not overly tight) fit of shell and pads
2. Chin strap that can be adjusted snugly under chin
3. One-inch gap above eyebrows
4. Covers the base of the skull, with no obstructions of frontal or peripheral vision
5. Cage covers the nose and mouth, leaving a one-inch gap from the face



JEFFERY BRIGHT, MS, ATC

Athletic Trainer, OhioHealth Sports Medicine

Another area of concern in recent years when dealing with equipment has been the development of MRSA or Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus. This is a form of antibiotic-resistant staph infection (see the other article in this newsletter written by Dr. Ruane detailing more about MRSA). This threat can be reduced through proper cleaning and drying of hockey equipment. One convenient method of accomplishing this is the Sani Sport system available through the Columbus Chiller locations.

If you're interested in learning more about how to ensure proper equipment fit and care, I invite you to schedule an OhioHealth Sports Medicine physician or athletic trainer to speak to your team, club or school for a personalized session. You can request a speaker by visiting www.GetInTheGameOhio.com and filling out our online form.